Prevention and Intervention in Cabra School Completion Programme

Dr Sylwia Kazmierczak-Murray

Programme Coordinator

Friday 23rd October 2015

- Since 2007 – leading SCP in Cabra

- 2005-2007 – researcher in EDC

- PhD Educational Disadvantage, St. Patrick's College 2011

- Member of Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists / Mental Health Subgroup / CORU registered

- Member of European Implementation Scientists' Collective

- Member of Tusla Partnership, Prevention and Family Support Steering Group for Dublin North West

- Member of Regional Education Subgroup for Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme in Dublin North West

School Completion Programme

- School-based support system / school clusters
- From DES through NEWB to DCYA / Tusla
- In-school / after-school / holiday supports
- Aims to reduce Early School Leaving (ESL)
- Governed by Local Management Committees / Cabra SCP LMC multi-agency body / communication structures for successful implementation
- In Cabra, initiated the concept of area-based approach to prevention and partnership

Locally managed service

- Locally managed / Coordinator and a team
- Multidisciplinary team in Cabra SCP
- The context of Cabra / census figures/ 'explosion of youth' / young and growing population
- Few services /'averaging of disadvantage'/ boundaries of services / DEIS vs non-DEIS
- SCP a key prevention and intervention service

Structure of presentation

- 'Why' – the needs of children / targeting criteria
- 'How' – broad processes / the role of SCP in schools / levels of support
- 'What' – specific interventions and programmes

Targeted support

- Cabra SCP operates on a referral basis / identifies children at risk of ESL in key developmental setting
- Care team meetings / Needs identified by school personnel (e.g. poor language skills, chaotic parenting, externalising behaviours in class)
- Strategy of Cabra SCP based on identified needs and the context of other services (e.g. one family resource centre in Cabra, 2.5 full staff members!)
- *Continuous* and simple referral process! – very efficient

Presence in schools a key

- Communication structures in schools (e.g. child has no lunch or is excluded by peers – information shared immediately)
- Presence in schools crucial / informal opportunities to chat to teachers, parents / meeting children on the street
- Large literature supporting that school based teams work best / work with *all* school staff and with the whole community
- External services rely on referral process driven by principals / SCP immediate response

Children at risk of ESL

Tusla Core Referral Criteria

- Poor attendance
- Behavioural issues / poor social and emotional skills
- Family history of early school-leaving
- Learning difficulties / poor educational engagement and attainment
- Member of a minority or 'in care'

In Cabra SCP

- BESD
- Poor or *inconsistent* attendance
- Family circumstances / Large chaotic family / Addiction or mental health difficulties in family / being in care
- Serious academic underachievement / language difficulties

Target List

- Based on Tusla criteria (esp. ESL in family and poor educational attainment), nearly 40% of children in our DEIS Band 1 boys' schools can be identified as being at risk of ESL / 25% in cluster

- Target especially those with multiple risk factors / about 4% across 7 DEIS schools / Interagency

- Framework of risk and protective factors helps in identification (e.g. literacy difficulties but supportive family)

Conor's story

- 13 years of age / 2nd year in secondary school
- Loves horses / wants to be a jokey
- Chaotic family, 6 children in family, single mum with a history of depression, poverty, very young mum, left school early
- Poor academic skills, anger problems, 'lashes out' in school
- Poor and inconsistent attendance and punctuality
- Does well in subjects that he likes, e.g. technology or art

Levels of SCP support

- Level 1 universal: school wide / class wide
- Level 2 targeted / preventative
- Level 3 intensive interventions / *interagency*

- Level 2 and 3 driven by a strategy / student attendance and participation care teams
- Reaches those unreached by whole class / school strategies

Level 1: Universal support

- School wide / class wide
- School enrichment programmes / transfer programmes / whole school attendance strategy / language and literacy supports
- Encouraging school completion vs reducing ESL! / school climate
- Teacher capacity building (psychological and speech & language supports) / Multi-level impact

Level 2: Targeted

- Majority of work / *Preventative* support
- Prevent further problems *and* at a young age / Cabra SCP young cluster: 30% between 4-7 years old / key prevention and early intervention service
- Issue based key work / evidence based programmes / personal and social development programmes / language and literacy supports

Level 3: Intensive

- Individualised interventions / *interagency*
- Issue based key work / evidence based programmes / personal and social development programmes / language and literacy supports
- Additional support (daily attendance monitoring / morning programme)
- EWS One Child One Team / intensive interagency interventions / Meitheal

Evidence-informed strategy

- Individually tailored support but evidence-informed *and* focused on issue – logical
- Language & Literacy and Social & Emotional Wellbeing – drivers to combat disadvantage in early years – improve learning and wellbeing
- Parents Plus parenting support, Working Things Out mental health prevention programmes, Mentoring for Achievement Programme, transfer programmes, speech & language and literacy supports
- 'Is there logic to the logic model?'

Issue-based key work: Examples

- Parental separation / Coming to terms with imprisonment in family – intervention focused on coping with sadness, strategies (e.g. breathing, talking to safe people)

- Externalising behaviour in class – explain importance of not lashing out in school due to stress at home, anger management strategies

- Aggressive and unsafe behaviour in yard – work on impulse control, awareness of consequences

Conor's story

- Anger management strategies
- Working Things Out
- Support for mum / Parents Plus
- Mentoring for Achievement Programme
- Homework Club
- Link to out of school supports
- Challenger Programme / Youth Club
- Horse riding programme during holidays

Strengths of SCP

- Action oriented / Solution focused work of SCP in the context of assessment focused services / offers more than 'support' / concrete interventions / often immediate response
- Focused on individual students and aims to improve *their* participation in schools
- Focused service / Can't tackle all social problems
- Educational intervention – works towards tangible outcomes that transfer directly to the classroom / focus on participation in school

Strengths of SCP, contd.

- Systematic early identification and intervention / systematic social and emotional support

- Integrated within school structures and clusters a network of schools

- Work from *within the system* thus reducing lengthy assessment processes – practical

- Child centred and needs led service

Possible future directions

- SCP has already changed school systems (dialogue / system orientation – community context) / Social pedagogy
- Future needs to build on local knowledge / but needs coherent training and coaching to implement evidence informed practice across SCP clusters
- Support knowledge translation of research evidence
- Extend cross sector engagement for a whole system improvement (Tusla / Meitheal)

Thank you!

Q & A

Contact:

Dr Sylwia Kazmierczak-Murray

Programme Coordinator

Cabra SCP, St. Finbar's BNS, Kilkieran Rd, Cabra

Mobile: 085 847 0837 / Email: cabrascp@gmail.com

Questions

- What skills & qualifications are needed in school support?

- Are Homework Clubs and Breakfast Clubs important / beneficial school supports?

Issues

- What about the non-targeted children who attend DEIS schools?

- DEIS allocation of funding / DEIS boundaries